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Business Development & Tourism
Development Branch

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Survey of Whitecourt.



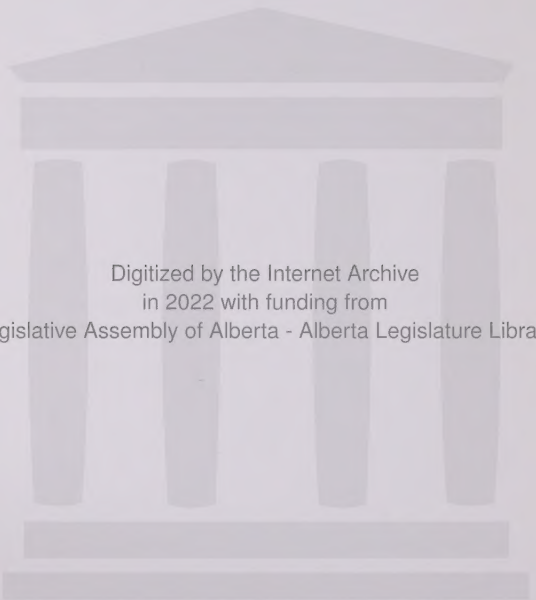
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**SURVEY
OF
WHITECOURT**

PUBLISHED BY THE
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GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA



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Town of Whitecourt

(Revised January 1, 1970)

1. LOCATION

Section 35-59-12-W5 in Census Division No. 14, Improvement District No. 109. The community is in the green area 110 miles northwest of Edmonton on Highway No. 43 and on a branch line of the C.N.R. It is near the confluence of the McLeod and Athabasca rivers.

2. ALTITUDE

2,290 ft. in the lower town, 2,440 ft. in the hilltop area.

Latitude - 54/09 Longitude - 115/41

3. TEMPERATURE

Mean summer, 52.6 degrees F.; Mean winter, 19.6 degrees F.; Mean average, 36.1 degrees F.

4. RAINFALL

Average annual rainfall, 14.36 inches; average annual snowfall, 59.4 inches; average annual precipitation, 20.30 inches.

5. GEOLOGY

Extensive alluvial deposits of sand and gravel present along the Athabasca and McLeod rivers at Whitecourt, may be suitable for development of groundwater supplies. Bedrock is of the Edmonton formation which is late Cretaceous in age. This formation is composed of a series of loosely consolidated sandstone and shale beds with minor coal seams.

6. SOIL

Whitecourt is in the grey-wooded soil zone. Vegetation is mixed deciduous and evergreen woodland in which muskegs and sedge bogs occur. Soils in this zone developed under humid soil moisture conditions, and the depth to lime varies from 30 to 50 inches. They are relatively less fertile than in other areas because of leaching and are low in nitrogen and organic matter. Legumes, hay and coarse grains are the most desirable crops.

7. HISTORY

The history of Whitecourt dates back to 1905 when Alberta became a province. Edmonton was the jumping-off point for many settlers from Eastern Canada and elsewhere who were bound for unsettled land of the Peace River

district. Some of those settled instead near the confluence of the Athabasca and McLeod rivers and in 1910, Whitecourt was formed. Several years after start of survey in 1905, surveyors for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway plotted a line to run between Edmonton and Grande Prairie, via Whitecourt. The line never materialized, however, and it wasn't until 1921 that Canadian National Railway reached the town. Fur trapping and lumbering were the chief industries of the area until discovery of oil in the area around 1955. Since that time several oil fields have been developed, absorption plants have been constructed and a number of plants producing natural gas and sulphur have been built in the area.

8. LIVING CONDITIONS

Whitecourt nestles in a valley near the junction of the Athabasca and McLeod Rivers and with its population of around 2,000, is the largest settlement close to the rapidly developing oil regions of Virginia Hills, Judy Creek and Swan Hills.

Six churches supply the spiritual needs of the community and educational facilities provide for grades 1 to 12. For the sportsman there is excellent big game hunting and fishing in the area. The forests in the district are considered one of the best hunting grounds in North America for moose, elk and deer.

With the completion and hardsurfacing of Highway No. 43 between Edmonton and Valleyview, the town has become a major stopover on the most direct route to Alaska.

There are 385 homes in the town and 78 resident trailers.

9. ADMINISTRATION

As Whitecourt still has New Town status, it is governed by a Board of Administrators consisting of seven people, five of whom are elected, and two appointed by the Provincial Government. A secretary-manager administers the affairs of the Town in accordance with policies set by the Board. A chairman of the Board of Administrators is elected within the Board itself, and he serves in a comparable capacity to that of a mayor. Steps have been taken to advance to regular Town status at which time a Mayor and six councillors will constitute the administration.

10. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Zoning by-laws and building codes are enforced by a Board of Administrators and Town Inspector. An electrical code conforms with the Alberta Electrical Protection Act, and Alberta Public Health Regulations govern the sanitary by-laws. Garbage is collected weekly from all residential dwellings. The town is policed by 4 constables under contract by the R.C.M.P., and the rural district is policed by an R.C.M.P. detachment consisting of a Corporal and 3 Constables.

11. FIRE PROTECTION

A fire brigade consists of a 20-man volunteer fire department. Equipment consists of one 625 GPM pumper with 500 gallon water tank fully equipped with hose, nozzles, ladders, axes, etc., as well as resuscitator and smoke ejector. A second unit is equipped with a 300 GPM pump, 500 gallon water tank and 2500 ft. of 2½ inch hose. Water is obtained from the McLeod River and pumped into a 150,000-gallon reservoir. There are 38 fire hydrants conveniently located throughout the residential and commercial areas.

12. TAX STRUCTURE

	1969 Net Assessment
Land	\$ 649,380
Buildings, 60% of fair value	3,081,940
Machinery and Equipment	33,600
Pipelines	37,530
Power	45,280
Alta. Government Telephones	
Land, Buildings, Works	35,070
Other Government property	72,820
Federal Government Property	53,910

Total Assessment \$4,009,530

Mill Rate - Municipal 30.7; School 24; Hospital 4.3; Total 59 mills.

13. AREAS

Area of town - 3,600 acres.

Streets, lanes and highways - 63.2 acres.

Public parks and playgrounds - 261 acres.



Fine new residential areas are being developed to serve the growing population.

Miles of Roads, Streets and Lanes:

	Asphalt	Gravel	Imp. Earth	Others	Total
Provincial Main	2.5				2.5
Provincial Secondary		0.8			0.8
Roads and Streets		4.1			4.1
Lanes and Alleys		0.5	0.6	0.2	1.3
					8.7

There are approximately 3 miles of cement sidewalk.

14. SEWER AND WATER MAIN MILEAGE

Sanitary - 10; Storm - 2; Water - 9.

15. POWER

Three phase 60 cycle power is supplied by Calgary Power Ltd. under a franchise.

Domestic Rates

For the first 20 KWH or less used per month - \$3.30 gross min. subject to 30c prompt payment discount, making \$3.00 net minimum.

All over 20 KWH used per month - 2c net per KWH.

Discount - as shown applies on any bill paid within 10 days of date rendered.

Connection charge - \$1.00.

Reconnection charge - twice net minimum charge.

Commercial Rates

First KW of connected load, including energy consumption up to 20 KWH per month - \$3.00 net.

Each additional ½ KW of connected load, including 5 KWH per month net - 50c.

Energy charge - First 100 KWH per KW - 6c net per KWH.

All additional energy per KWH - 2c net per KWH.

Discount—Above charges are net. For billing purposes the net bill is increased by approximately 10% (but not less than 30c) in order to arrive at the gross amount. Bills are payable net within 10 days of date rendered.

Power Rates

Service charge - per KVA of installation (monthly charge) - \$1.00.
(one motor horsepower or one kilowatt in heating apparatus considered equivalent to one kilovolt-ampere: KVA).

Energy charge - First 50 KWH per month per KVA of installation - 5c per KWH.

Next 50 KWH per month per KVA of installation - 3½c per KWH.

All over 100 KWH per month pre KVA of installation - 1½c per KWH.

Discount - 10%, 10 days based on dollars of total bill with a minimum discount of 30c per month.

Minimum charge - \$3.30 gross, \$3.00 net; or the amount of the Service Charge, whichever is greater.

Consumer's deposit - \$2.00 per KVA of installation and not less than \$6.00 or at the company's option, twice the estimated bill.

Reconnection charge - \$6.00.

16. WATER

Water for the Town is obtained from the McLeod River before it joins the Athabasca River, and is stored in a 150,000 gallon storage tank. Domestic rates are \$3.50 per month plus \$3.00 service charge.

The Athabasca River drains an area of 7,300 square miles before reaching Whitecourt. It originates in the Rocky Mountains from melting glaciers and terminates in Lake Athabasca.

The Athabasca River has its peak flow during the months of June and July. The discharge volume during these months averages 25,000 cubic feet per second or 156,250 imperial gallons per second. The minimum water flow occurs during the month of March when the discharge drops to 1,500 cubic feet per second or 9,375 imperial gallons per second. The yearly average is 15,000 CFS.

The Athabasca River has ice conditions between the months of November and May of each year. The water temperature varies from freezing 32 degrees F. to a maximum of 50 degrees F. during the summer.

The water quality is considered good at Whitecourt. A typical composite water analysis of the Athabasca River at Whitecourt is:

Water Analysis	Parts per Million
Dissolved Oxygen MG/L	10
Bis Cem Demand MG/L	1.5
PH	7.5
Alkalinity	150
Total Solids	150

The McLeod River originates in the Rocky Mountains southwest of Edson and discharges into the Athabasca River at Whitecourt. It drains an area of some 15,000 square miles. The McLeod River has its peak flow during the months of June and July and the minimum flow between February and March. The maximum average water flow is 3,520 CFS with the minimum of 150 CFS or 21,824 gallons per second and 930 imperial gallons per second respectively.

The McLeod River has ice conditions between November and April of each year. The water temperature varies from 32 degrees F. to 65 degrees F. in the summer. The river is used for sports and is a fisherman's paradise for pickerel, jackfish, grayling and rainbow trout.

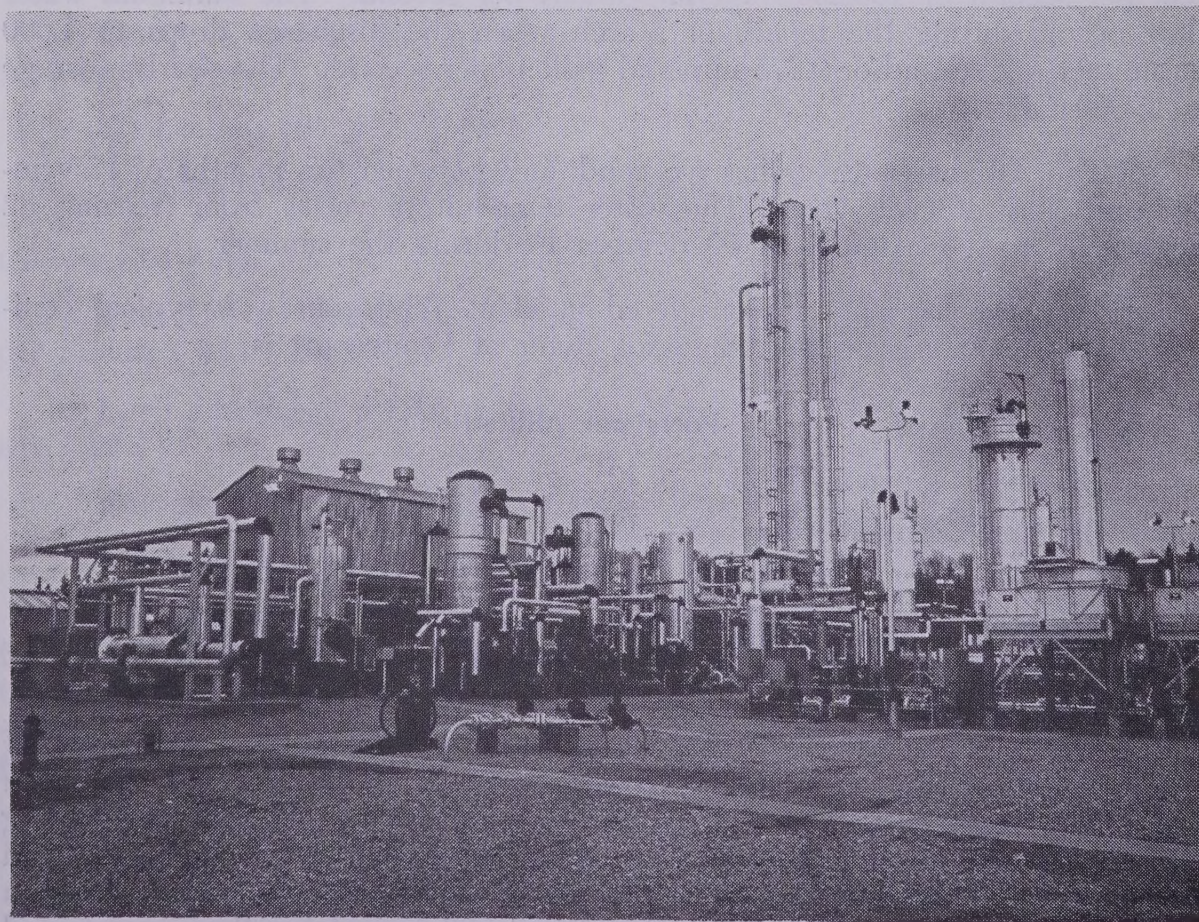
The water quality is excellent and the Town of Whitecourt obtains its water supply from the McLeod River.

A typical water analysis is:

Total Solids	340 ppm
Hardness	230
Sulphate	20
Chlorides	1
Iron	.25
Fluorine	1.3

17. GAS

Natural gas is supplied under a 25-year franchise to Northwest Utilities Ltd. with the source at the Mobil Oil Carson Creek Plant, twelve miles north of Whitecourt. Basic rate for domestic supply is 5.4c per therm, which is considerably below rates in comparable towns.



The multi-million dollar gas extraction plant at Whitecourt makes a significant contribution to the district economy.

18. L.P. GAS

This is available from three local distributors at an average rate of 15c per gallon or \$5.50 per 100 lb. cylinder. In addition, approximately 2,100 barrels of propane and butane are produced at the Mobil Oil Carson Creek Plant, shipped to Whitecourt by pipeline and distributed by railway tank car and truck.

19. DIESEL FUEL

There are four bulk distributors of diesel fuel and bulk oil products, representing major oil companies.

20. COAL

Very little coal is used; however there are a few commercial deposits within the immediate area.

21. LOCAL RESOURCES

Forest products such as lumber, ties and pulp, gas, sulphur, propane, butane, water (See Heading No. 16), agricultural products, sand and gravel, furs.

22. GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND SERVICES

Federal Department of Transport, radio range station, post office, Provincial Department of Lands and Forest Division Office, Fish and Wildlife Office, Department of Highways and Transport, Department of Social Development Office, Alberta Government Telephones, Alberta Liquor Store, Treasury Branch Agent, Lac Ste. Anne Health Unit, Municipal Town Administration Office and attached police barracks completed in February, 1968, at a cost of a quarter million dollars, new 34-bed Municipal Hospital.

23. HEALTH SERVICES

The Whitecourt Hospital is administered by a locally appointed Board and operated by a hospital administrator and staff.

The Lac Ste. Anne Health Unit provides a resident Health Nurse operating from an office in the Town Administration Building.

There are also: three practising physicians, one dentist, one chiropractor, one optometrist (calling monthly), and one drug store.

24. PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLED PERSONAL SERVICES (Excluding Health Services)

Two barristers and lawyers, three beauty parlors, two barber shops, one jeweller, one chartered accountant, one photographer, consultant geologist, oilfield consultant.

25. TRANSPORTATION

Twice daily trucking service from Edmonton to Whitecourt. Canadian Coachways three times daily service from Edmonton through to the Peace River country and return. CNR, Edmonton to Whitecourt daily, freight only. Taxi stand, three cabs.

26. NEWSPAPERS

Whitecourt Star - weekly.

27. COMMUNICATIONS

Alberta Government Telephones — all services, CNR Telegraph - telex, Post Office, all Edmonton radio stations. Booster stations on Whitecourt Mountain provide excellent reception for CFRN-TV and CBXT-TV.

28. FINANCIAL FACILITIES

Bank of Montreal, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Treasury Branch Agency.

29. HOTELS

Rivers Motor Hotel, fully licensed, with 35 rooms. Whitecourt Hotel, fully licensed with 20 rooms.



The affairs of the community are administered from this modern new administration building.

30. MOTELS

There are eight motels with a total of 175 units.

31. CHURCHES

United, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic.

32. LODGES

Masons, Eastern Star.

33. SERVICE CLUBS

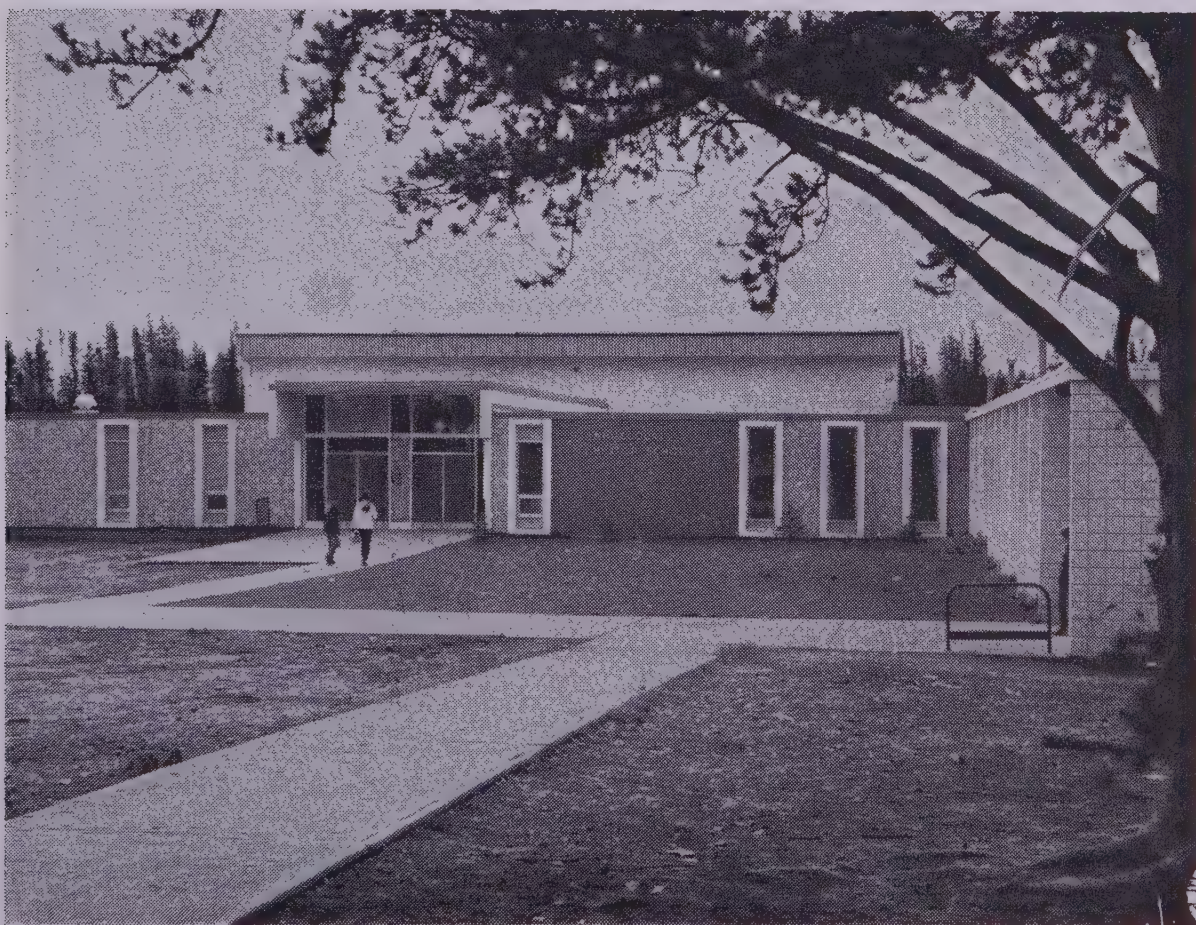
Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Legion, Women's Auxiliary Canadian Legion, Lions, Kinsmen, Kinettes.

34. SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Home and School Association, Whitecourt Flying Club, Golf Club, Curling Club, Bowling Club, Oilwives Association, Toastmasters, Recreation Board.

35. EDUCATION

Schools in Whitecourt are administered by the County of Lac Ste. Anne, No. 28. There is one Elementary School teaching grades 1 to 6, High school teaching 7 to 12, and a Roman Catholic Separate School teaching grades 1 to 7.



Children in Whitecourt have the advantage of several fine schools with excellent equipment.

36. THEATRES AND HALLS

Whitecourt Legion Hall, the Vista Theatre, the Whitecourt Drive-In Theatre, Masonic Hall, Arena, Recreation Building.

37. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Public Library is a community library supported by the Town with grants from the Provincial Government under the Library Act. It is open three days per week. The Recreation Board keeps a continuous series of arts, crafts and educational activities in operation.

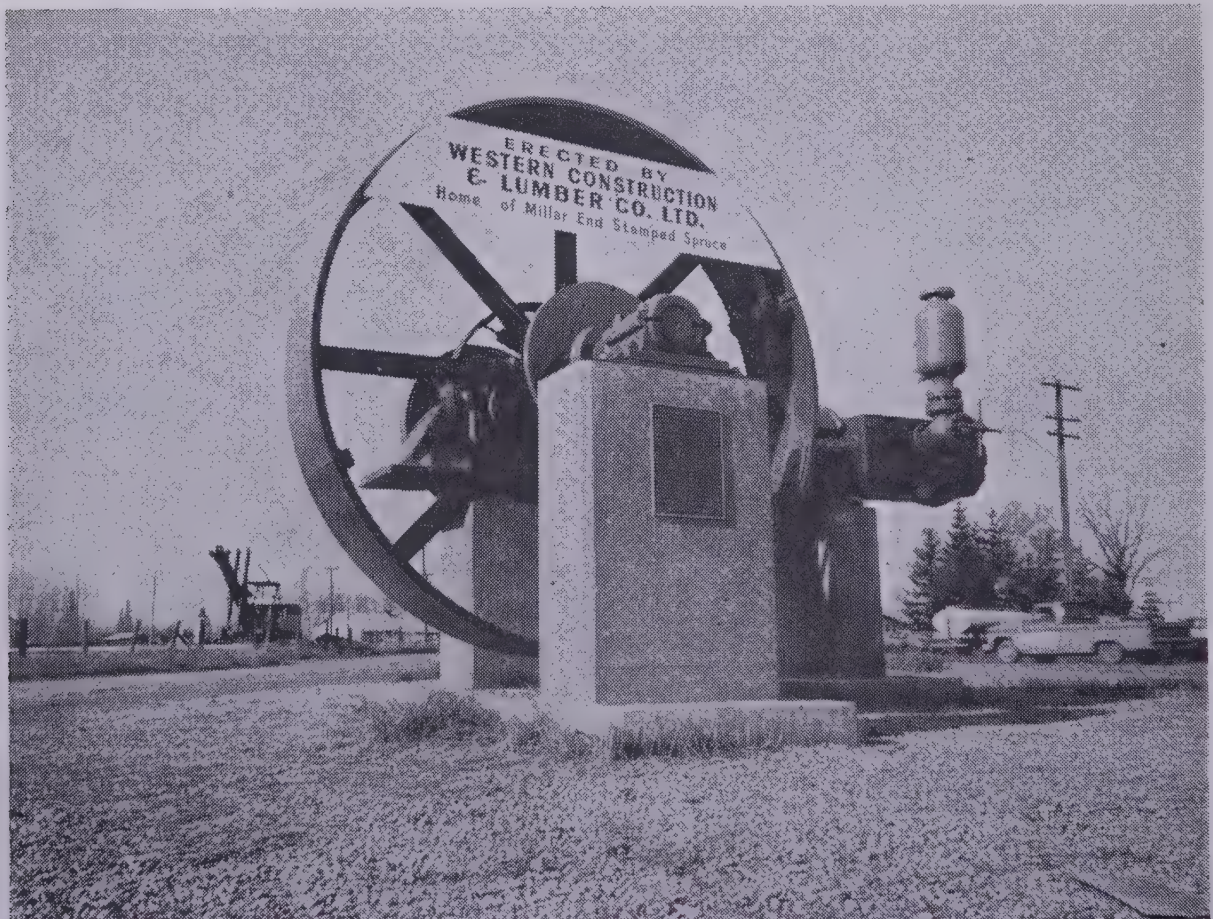
38. YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Boys — Boy Scouts, Wolf Cubs, Air Cadets; Girls — Girl Guides, Brownies, 4-H Club.

39. SPORTS

Baseball, hockey and football at junior and senior level; badminton, golf, curling, bowling, flying club.

Facilities — Covered curling rink with three sheets of artificial ice, nine-hole golf course, tennis court, six-lane bowling alley. A new Arena, one outdoor rink of regulation hockey size, three baseball diamonds, half-mile dirt race track.



Unique memorial to the industry that gave the town its start, this sawmill flywheel is of interest to all visitors.

There is an abundance of small streams in the immediate district well stocked with rainbow trout and grayling. There are also several small lakes teeming with whitefish, perch, pickerel and northern pike.

Upland game birds are plentiful, and the area is renowned for its excellent big game hunting.

40. FAIRS

Kinsmen Winter Carnival — two days in February. Tri Service Rodeo and Chuckwagon event — July 1st. Shoppers Bonanza in August.

41. HISTORIC SITES

Nil.

42. CO-OPERATIVES

Nil.

43. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Type of Industry or Business	No. of Establishments	Type of Industry or Business	No. of Establishments
Banks	1	Insurance & Real Estate	2
Barbers	2	Lumber Yards	2
Beauty Parlors	2	Milk Distributor	2
Body Shops	2	Music Teacher	1
Building Contractors	2	Motels	5
Building Supplies	1	Oil Distributors	4
Butchers	2	Oil Field Contractors	4
Cartage Delivery	1	Oil Field Offices	2
Clothing (men's)	2	Oil Trucking Firms	2
Clothing (women's)	2	Oil Drilling Mud	1
Confectionery	1	Painters and Decorators	1
Doctors	3	Planing Mills	3
Drug Stores	1	Pool Rooms	1
Dairy Drive-In	1	Propane Gas Dist.	2
Electrical Appliances	1	Plumbing	1
Electrical Contractors	1	Restaurants	8
Garages and Service Stations	9	Tailors	1
Groceries	2	Transports	3
General Stores	3	Trailer Sales	2
Hardware	1	Variety Store	1
Hotels	2	Welding and Machine Shops	2

44. SITES

There are at any given time at least fifty fully serviced residential lots available either from the town or from private owners. Commercial sites are regularly available at a reasonable cost, and there are many industrial sites available, either serviced or unserved, and approximately 10 miles of track frontage presently unoccupied.

45. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The first industry in the area was trapping and then lumbering. In 1919 the first lumber mill started with another one in 1926 and the most recent in 1957. The mills were the most economic feature of the town, supplying it with a steady payroll. The lumbering industry has been booming. Last year forestry products earned the area millions of dollars and the future promises even brighter things. A pulp mill is proposed for the area with the land already purchased and is located three miles from the present townsite. The total cost of this plant will be \$30 million. Road construction has already been started on the project.

Oil and gas was discovered in the area during 1956, with Whitecourt being in the centre and the nearest town to these discoveries. Gas processing plants are being built at Windfall west of the town and at Kaybob north of town. The boundaries of the oil fields are still being extended and there is constant speculation as to their final size and importance as producers.



Timber products are still a major aspect of the community's economy, with many thousands board feet of lumber shipped daily.

Farming is not an important industry in the Whitecourt area. In 1956 there were 198 farms in Improvement District No. 109. The average size of farm was 414 acres of which 135 acres were improved and 85 acres in crop. Eighty-two per cent of the land occupied is owned by the operator. Barley, oats and tame hay are the principal crops. Cattle, with 18 head per farm, are the principal class of livestock kept and sheep numbers are relatively high, an average of 5 head in 1956. A considerable portion of farm cash income is realized from the sale of forest products.

The completion of Highway 43 joining West Central Alberta with the Peace River district and the North has added tourism as another major factor in the economy of the town. A commitment by McMillan-Bloedel Limited to construct a \$50,000,000 newsprint mill at Whitecourt, starting 1970 promises to provide the community with a solid industrial base from which to grow.

46. TRADING AREA

North fifty miles, northwest sixty miles, south twenty miles and east twenty miles.

47. POPULATION

Trading area population 1969 census - 7,000.

Town population 1969 census - 2,894.

Town population 1956 census - estimated 600.

